



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

# LETTERS FROM A FRENCH PRISONER OF WAR

## II.

---

VERDUN—"IN RESERVE" UNDER THE BOMBARDMENT

*July 29th.*

MY BELOVED PARENTS:

Forgive me, I beg you, for not having written you yesterday, but we were in a rather peculiar position. As we were "in reserve," they put us in the pits a few hundred metres from the lines, in a spot more or less well chosen as regards shells. Besides, we were so packed in the pits that it was extremely difficult to move. I was made ill several times yesterday afternoon and last night. This morning I attended sick call and I am to rest until this evening. I feel that I am getting better already. It was, I believe, caused by a very fatiguing day, the impossibility of moving, and the heat. Later we were able to get a little more space in our pit, but we could do with even a little more.

Luckily our lieutenant has asked that we be relieved quickly, and it certainly will be *very, very soon*.

. . . Good courage for all of you! *Serenity and calm*, under all circumstances, for you as for me.

*July 30th.*

I have come back from the relief station to the reserve. I am beginning to feel a little appetite and am no longer dead with thirst as I was during the two days previous.

Yesterday evening when I arrived at our little shelter (one of the few which the day's bombardment had respected) there was sad news: our poor sector had been pitifully tried by the shell fire, quite a number of wounded, quite a number of dead, among the best. So we left our shelter and took

up a position some two hundred metres lower down, in a sort of small entrenchments. In mine it is almost possible to sit down without one's head sticking up, but it is more prudent to lie down most of the time, so that the enemy airplanes can't spot you. I was able to sleep with my legs stretched out, and that completely refreshed me. The German shells raged all day, but there were few additional wounded in the sector. You see that the spot is far from bad.

. . . During the last three days I have known some hard moments (fatigue and danger), but I am glad of them, certain that I have come out of them hardened, more of a man for these moments. In all frankness I may say that my morale is higher than ever. Long live our common ideal of peace and love on earth!

*August 1st.*

To-night I have received your dear letter, which I read when the shells grew rarer. . . . Moreover, I assure you, without any boasting, that having attained to where we are, it would take much to disquiet us at all, and that indifference has become the fashion.

When you receive these lines we shall be resting, happy as kings, and having long ceased to think of the few disagreeable moments of this period "in reserve."

*August 2nd.*

A joyful evening. Before midnight we shall be relieved. Oh! . . . I, like everyone else, have lost a lot of my belongings here, and my trousers are in shreds; but in order to leave this place, I would go off, if it were necessary, in the costume of Adam, and it wouldn't take long!

This morning, a few moments before dawn, we had a "grenade fatigue duty" . . . out on the plain, since there are no communication trenches. We ran over some bad spots where things were dropping a little. When we looked back at our abandoned shelter, it was time that we all had left it. . . . A day longer, and we should have had all the cement roof on our heads! It is all upside down.

The other night, at the moment when we were preparing to descend a little lower, a shell fell just behind the little shelter. Then?—Then the shell did not burst. I, like the rest, had had the time to fall flat, nose in the ground.

I tell you all this because it is now ancient history. To

sum it up, we have suffered physically and have risked our lives constantly for these several days. The test is finished. *I come out of it more joyous and resolute than ever.*

#### AFTER BEING RELIEVED

How delightful to be here safe and sound, out of our hole, and far away from the disagreeable whizzing and the menacing explosions of the enemy's shells! And the hot soup. . . . And the freedom of taking any position one wants, instead of having to lie most of the time on one's side. . . . The cap in place of the helmet, . . . etc., etc. We don't feel tired any more; all that is forgotten, everyone exhales gaiety and carelessness.

What a fine bath I have just had, in the Meuse, before putting on clean underclothes!

There is only one dark spot in the picture: the absent, not the wounded, but those we shall never see again. Alas! one can't change that.

A lovely little corner of the country, civilians, a fine summer sun, straw for sleeping and—last but not least—a grocer's where we can stock up. Oh! the delight of devouring cheese and grapes after six days when we scarcely ate at all!

A few details now about our positions since our last stay "up there."

When we arrived, tired as usual, we expected to remain in the valley, at Carrières (as we had been told), a corner that was well bombarded, but not in the same way as higher up. Instead of that, we climbed up and came to the "redoubts," a sort of little cemented squares, about a metre thick, a metre, or a little more, in width, and no more than three metres long.

An important detail to mention is that the redoubts are partly covered with a large slab of cement, to which an iron bar is joined. It is said that these attract the attention of the airplanes and "sausages," and they seem to attract the shells. In addition, these "lodgings" are situated in the middle of a little hill, or, to be more exact, on the other side of a valley. Still better: these redoubts are built on a road along which, in full sight, all the wounded pass towards the first-aid stations, as well as the mounted scouts. You can imagine if the road is fired on and if they get the range of the redoubts.

When we arrived we only summed up the situation vaguely.

As there was no room in the redoubt, I took up my lodging two or three metres in front, in a shell hole. Some minutes after I had made this choice the shells began to fall so near that I made one bound from my hole to the redoubt, where I thought I should be in better safety as far as splinters went. And there we were, twelve of us, in a dugout where there was just room for six!

A tornado of shells followed which soon taught us something about the situation. Bent over, huddled one against the other, we waited. Sometimes the Germans sent their projectiles three or four at a time; and these are not always the little ones, I can assure you. I leave you to imagine if the noise is an æsthetic one. . . . The tornado passed as it had come; the dugout was intact—nothing had struck us but earth.

During all the rest of a long day, until night came, we stayed there, crowded together, piled on top of one another, our muscles aching for want of a place to straighten out our legs. And with all this, a sun—such a sun—which heated our helmets. . . . When the end of the day came I was half ill, vomiting the little I had eaten, and my stomach in a queer state.

What is our life in the dugout like? Entire days spent lying down in the sun, covered with a cape or a piece of tent cloth, so as not to be recognized by the airplanes, waiting for night to bring coolness, a general lull, and the freedom of movement; visits to our comrades in the neighboring dugouts, etc. From time to time red rockets and green rockets. . . . Good! If one is outside that is the time to regain one's dugout, for the enemy's infantry is asking for artillery support. Then a barrage fire breaks out that lasts for about a quarter of an hour. Glued to the ground, the ear following the whizzing of the shells (one likes to know beforehand if they are going to fall very near), the helmet covering first the head, then the face, one awaits the end of the bombardment. . . . All this lacks clearness and precision. But how can one know what one is about amidst such a series of confused happenings?

I shall have plenty of things to tell you and I will continue as soon as my head is quite rested and when I am fit for the slightest mental effort.

*August 6th.*

This evening I have had a quiet little dinner with two intimate comrades of my squad, a materialistic engineer and a Parisian who, without being a wonder, has always been blessed with a sense of the ridiculous, to an extraordinary extent.

On the menu figures *a hare*, for *three*. . . . Evidently I am a spendthrift these days. But what can you expect? In days following a stay at the Thiaumont Motion Pictures one feels such a need of reaction!

In the report, written congratulations of the Colonel, declaring that our regiment "by means of its stoical resistance under the most severe bombardments," has permitted the realization of the present offensive around Thiaumont! So be it! But not our regiment quite alone . . .

I see by the papers that it has "grown hot" in our old sector of Thiaumont-Fleury. This should mean, not only the attacks, but frightful and continuous bombardments. If we had to be there now there would be nothing to do but accept it all with good will; but since we are relieved, we must find a reason for being content to be here.

. . . At this time you must have received news from me. I want you to know that, according to my habit, I have sent you every day, even from the "reserve," some little message, except during the first day, when it was physically impossible.

Be sure to get a good rest and don't give in to any bothersome thoughts. We are taking our vacations at the same time.

Our company, which was not one of those which suffered most, lost at Verdun the half of its effective force in wounded, ill and dead.

Yesterday afternoon helped in putting up a wire netting in a mine crater. Afterwards, in a single trip, carried four planks and some dirt sacks, empty, from the road to the height of the hut. In the second trip: a box of grenades, two of us, from the road to the first line. Third trip: planks and dirt sacks from the hut to the first line.

Just a little shower, but the communication trenches are full of big puddles in places. The carrying the planks—oaken planks—was very hard, at least for me: it is at the same time heavy and awkward.

## LETTERS FROM A FRENCH PRISONER 209

The weather seems to be improving. . . . Contrary to custom, the Germans have just sent a certain number of pretty big shells into our corner—or at least, near said corner. As there is still a good deal of mud, very few have exploded. Spirits and health good.

*September 22nd.*

This morning lovely autumn weather, blue sky, light wind, foliage already yellow. . . . One feels the coming winter in this delightful September temperature.

Splendid starry heavens. As I was going back to my quarters Victor Hugo's verse kept running through my mind:

*"Le croissant fin et clair parmi ces fleurs de l'ombre."*

### WINTER MARCHES

*November 28th.*

Muster this morning at half-past six. We made only a short march, some seven kilometres. Fog, but no rain.

We are quartered here in a huge barn, holding a generous quantity of hay.

. . . "Letters, letters!" . . . I prick up my ears and almost at once I hear my name. Seated on my straw, by the light of an old candle-end I have been enjoying your dear letter. . . .

I started on our march this morning in new shoes which I had never worn before. Evidently I am not yet as comfortable with the new footgear as with the old, but I soon grow accustomed to them. And they haven't hurt my feet at all, and that is the principal thing.

I am in an absolutely perfect physical condition and I carry my equipment with ease. Walking, too, has never been my weak point.

Things go even better than usual. Health? More than perfect. Spirits? At the top of Mont Blanc. Enthusiasm, gaiety, and not the shadow of a care.

*November 30th.*

A splendid night's sleep in a barn full of straw. This morning about half-past five a reveille full of charm. "Get up! Muster in half an hour." Then what an agreeable

shoving and pushing and pleasant hunt for one's things gone astray in the straw. . . . Finally . . .

To add to our pleasure, we had no soup before setting out, only a quart of coffee. Enthusiasm!

Then we started. They talked of sixteen kilometres—something special, they must be, since they were equal to twenty-five kilometres of the usual kind. As it was our fourth day of the march, and with our light equipment, you know, the distance seemed to us pretty stiff. . . . But all the fatigue disappeared when we reached the end of our *raid*.

*December 3rd.*

This morning we left Pont St. Maxence; after a march of fifteen kilometres we have just arrived at Neuilly-sur-Clermont.

#### IN THE TRENCHES OF THE SOMME

(*January-February, 1917*)<sup>1</sup>

Stood six hours' guard duty in two periods, last night, which I spent walking in the trenches. It began to snow and has only just stopped.

There were only little individual shelters. I was able to sleep last night in spite of my cold feet.

*January 17th.*

Last night I stood four hours guard in two periods, doing duty with a machine rifle, to replace at my request a sick comrade.

I longed for a little individual shelter where one can stretch out during the hours off duty.

I slept there, but I was awakened by the cold in my feet, which, however, was only temporary, since it disappeared as soon as I had walked a little.

This morning the snow begins again. Yes, our bread was generally frozen, during this last weather in the trenches, and our "*pinard*" (wine) covered with a light skim of ice. Our shoes and our clothes are now dry and the cold in our feet doesn't prevent our sleep any more.

<sup>1</sup>This was the time of the intense and prolonged cold, rare in France. One would never guess it in reading the lines written by the little infantryman during this hard period. His constant desire is not to make things *dramatic*.



. . . The muddy slime which stuck to us has now solidified and begins to fall off . . .

We were relieved yesterday evening. A long journey in the darkness through the communication trenches. A delightful promenade during which one risks every minute injuring one's countenance by contact with the frozen and slippery gratings.

We finally reached our quarters at four o'clock in the morning. Soup, coffee . . . and we were soon asleep on the meagre and dirty straw of this barn.

. . . Paradise for us after the days on the front line!

I hope that all the same you won't let yourselves be frozen, and I count on you to treat yourselves with more consideration.

We have attained our second coverlet at night and a little more straw. So much the better, because at night one would not easily mistake our barn for a hot bath.

I am always more and more conscious how privileged I am, in comparison with my comrades, and I wonder how those who do not get from their families any help, spiritual or material, can stand such periods as those of our last stay in the front line.

I feel an immense pity for the whole of humanity, for all that lives and suffers, for the enemy as well as for ourselves. This does not weaken me in the least, and in no way interferes with my present task.

Hope, nevertheless, continually . . . ah! but the world now is sad when one thinks of it! . . .

#### TOWARDS THE BATTLE

(*May, 1917*)

[After his return from Paris, our son passed several weeks with his regiment in a quiet wooded sector. But military happenings had followed one after the other: the falling back of the German armies towards the Hindenburg line; the French offensive in April, followed by desperate fighting north of Rheims, in the region of Chemin des Dames, and at such points as Moronvilliers, hotly disputed for their value as observation points.]

*May 16th.*

We are leaving this charming summer resort day after to-morrow. We go by automobile. These perpetual distrac-

tions make me frankly nationalistic, and I hope that the war, this pleasure party, will never end.

Feeling very courageous I changed my underclothes, and I washed the said clothes. This proves once again that war is useful, since one learns in it all kinds of trades.

After five hours of automobile (we were a little crowded in these comfortable and rapid vehicles; but what does that matter?) we got down at the door of M—— the P——.

I should not be surprised if pretty soon we did not find ourselves again face to face with the Germans.

Don't be astonished if some day or other the news stops suddenly, even for some little time. Note that it is *just by chance* and *as a simple measure of precaution* that I have made this little remark to you.

I don't know whether the post is regular in this sector, which does not exactly equal the one we have left in tranquility. This thought, however, is far from troubling my peace in the least. We shall see when we get there. And then I have the certainty once again that things will go well with me.

I am indignant at the way they exploit the soldier here: thirty-six sous for a litre of wine; thirty-three sous for camembert cheese; seven sous for a little orange.

Everything goes even better than usual: *spirits excellent and gay*, although I have no doubt but that some disagreeable moments are ahead of us. But, once more, ALL WILL GO WELL.

#### BEFORE GOING INTO THE TRENCHES

Our Second Lieutenant thinks that we shall have some unpleasant moments, but that it will not be so bad as our stay at Verdun. . . . Let us hope so. . . . He kindly exhorted us to "keep up good spirits," and not to worry ourselves. Thanks for this good counsel, "an endeavor which I take note of" to encourage us.

I went to see a 400 gun which is near. It is fantastic and you can have no conception of the thing until you have seen it with your own eyes. It is in the construction of engines of this kind, destined to the destruction of thinking creatures, that man is expending his intelligence in this twentieth century of our era.

At all costs, and in any way, this must be the end of conflict, this war must be the last.

## LETTERS FROM A FRENCH PRISONER 213

### THE BATTLE OF MORONVILLIERS—THE LAST LETTERS

#### FIRST LINE TRENCHES

*May 25th.*

Our march to relieve the others last night was pretty hard. First, the road was long. Then, it was very warm and our equipment considerable. Then someone had the happy idea to make us carry our kit into the first line, which added much to our fatigue. Moreover, before going into the trenches, we encountered a fire of single shells, of different calibres, which added a charm to our trip.

We occupy, not shell holes, but a trench. Oh! a trench far from perfect, not deep enough to walk in without bending in many places—but at least, we have a trench, and we must not complain.

The Germans are less than one hundred metres from here, at about seventy-five metres, some say; and others declare fifty metres.

Artillery on both sides keeps up a certain activity; shells all the time overhead.

The Germans didn't aim so badly last night and this morning, and now I can recognize pretty closely by the sound in which zone each shell will fall.

Up to now we have had no experience of barrage fire. Under such conditions *life is perfectly bearable*, in spite of the heat.

*May 26th, 1917 (noon).*

MY BELOVED PARENTS:

The enemy's artillery continues to show a certain activity. Yesterday afternoon there were a great number of shells, time shells as well as percussion shells, which were intended for the first line. More than once the Germans have suffered reprisal fire which they clamored for.

During the night the artillery on both sides was not silent. The big shells of the enemy seemed to fall farther than during the afternoon. The Germans carried their impudence so far as to bring forward some of their "minnies" which, however, did not fall in our immediate region.

We profited by the night to organize our little trench. We deepened it and then constructed a little roof with our

tent covers, the only way to protect us from the rays of the sun.

This morning the Germans struck furiously at our first line with a long fire of big shells (150 or 210?), battering all the region and luckily falling a little too far, but occasionally nearer than we could have wished.

Then followed a lull. And now the Germans are beginning to fire again—but it is a fire much less frequent than that of this morning, with shells that fall at a distance that is more than respectable. Nothing very serious nor annoying. We, too, are sending over some shells to the Germans just now: that won't do them any harm.

There is a great activity in the air forces. The foe's airplanes show a rare indiscretion, trying continually to observe what doesn't concern them. From time to time they get a taste of artillery fire; too seldom, according to my opinion.

Last night we had pretty good rations: wine, coffee, meat, bread, a drop of brandy. Bringing up supplies here is a difficult undertaking: first, one has to go far to fetch it, and in addition, the shells sometimes, it seems, take a little trip into that region. Shall I be sent to-night on supply duty? I don't know, and besides it doesn't matter. (Well, well! a good dressing of 75's for our comrades opposite.)

. . . Splendid weather, perhaps a little warm . . .

I am still absolutely ignorant how long a time we are to spend here.

*More confidence and serenity than ever. I am in perfect condition from every point of view.*

*Courage and optimism for you, too. And not too much work.*

I think of you unceasingly with a great tenderness, and I embrace you with all my filial affection and gratitude.

Your loving son.

P. S.—We have not had a single wounded man up to the present. Love.

#### THE FIRST MESSAGE FROM THE MISSING

[On May 27th, Whitsunday, about four o'clock in the morning, in the course of an attack by the enemy, our son was captured. The French line, at first shaken, was later restored. But the regiment had suffered so that it was necessary to fall back. It was honored by a mention in

## LETTERS FROM A FRENCH PRISONER 215

the orders of the army corps: "The — Regiment of Infantry during the days of the 26th and 27th of May, in spite of a bombardment of an unheard-of intensity of shells of large calibre and gas shells, withstood obstinate and violent attacks, constantly renewed by a furious enemy, superior in number. Outflanked at several points of its line, it has succeeded, in spite of severe losses, and in spite of considerable physical difficulties, in maintaining the integrity of its position, thanks to the energetic and brilliant counter-attacks almost man against man."

What had happened to our son? Was he wounded at the time he was captured? Had he been able to pass uninjured, on his way to the German lines, the zone covered by the French barrage fire?

At last, July 2nd, the following message arrived:]

May 28th, 1917.

MY BELOVED PARENTS:

I am now a prisoner, sound and in good health. All goes well. I have not yet a final address. My love.

### EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS WRITTEN WHILE CAPTIVE IN THE INVADED REGIONS

[After he was captured, our son was not transferred to Germany into a regular prison camp, but was kept in the invaded regions, in a spot unknown to us, and in which "military reasons" prevented his being visited by a German pastor, even though he was a chaplain. During the three first months he was brigaded in a "battalion of French laborers." From the end of June he begged us to send him "nourishing and strengthening food, by the quickest way." But during the first six months he acknowledged the receipt of only two packages of provisions. We have reason to think that he was twice in the hospital for a short stay, for what cause we do not know; we have never known either the nature of his occupations nor the way in which he is lodged, clothed or fed. The only thing that is certain is that he passed eight months in the realm of secrecy, arbitrary power and misery.

Before then our son wrote to us every day with absolute regularity. . . . The brusque interruption of this filial correspondence did not shake his morale; from the depths of his solitude, his messages that took so long in coming, have always rung out like a virile call to energy and hope.]

June 30th, 1917.

I am still in perfect health and in excellent spirits; I have optimism, hope and faith. I look into the future. I shall come back to you with a treasure of priceless experiences; I shall have become a man, and it is with confidence that I shall prepare myself to approach the life which now I am sure of knowing some day. With what eagerness I shall

furnish my mind with all the knowledge that it lacks! What exciting conversations lie ahead!

*July 15th.*

Everything is going well with me. I am sure that you are full of confidence in regard to me, and that my present condition is the cause of great consolation to you.

*September 1st.*

A service as great as the correspondence of prisoners cannot work without some hitches from time to time. It is therefore not astonishing if my letters for a certain time fail to reach you.

. . . As regards food, I should be glad to receive anything at all, provided it is permitted to send it: dried vegetables and canned things would seem to be the best. I should like books of all sorts which you may choose among well-known authors who write well, and in cheap editions. As for clothes, I should like to be the possessor of two warm shirts, two good pair of drawers, a sweater, a muffler, three pair of good stockings, three towels and some handkerchiefs. Add to the package a tooth-brush and insect powder for vermin. Sending soap is prohibited. But, let me say once more, that as this will be only one trial-sending, and as so many packages get lost, avoid making an expensive parcel, and let a judicious number of days elapse between the departure of the packages; I should be sorry to have you go to unnecessary expense for me.

Things continue to go better than ever for me: health is perfect, and the conditions of our life from all points of view are good (some changes for the better have taken place). I lead an existence that is very quiet and have enormous leisure. If I can get some food from you and books, I shall be as happy as a king. Up to now I have had only a comedy of Alfred Capus and Alphonse Daudet's *Jack*, a work which I am now reading passionately. But all the same, I tell you, that even without a package, my present life has nothing in it that may not be borne and that I am not exactly to be pitied. So be fully reassured on this matter and think of me only with serenity and confidence.

Now that our joyful reunion has become a certainty, all we have to do is to learn how to wait with patience, calm and gaiety, without the slightest worry on my account. I shall have learned by personal experiences what home life is worth;

I shall know better than others how to enjoy it and to profit by my family after the trials I have gone through; and I assure you that I shall give myself to make you share my happiness, and that to this task all my faculties will be devoted. Such thoughts fill me with continual joy. So follow my example, and live in joy and hope.

. . . As for parcels, I dare not count too much on their arriving soon. It will be fine if they reach me . . . and too bad if they are lost.

*August 23rd.*

Limit severely the number of the parcels you send and do not let them be too expensive. This, to avoid too much expense which would be useless if the parcels are lost.

*October 1st.*

Superior force (nothing disagreeable, quite the contrary) prevented my writing my last letter and my card before last.<sup>1</sup> . . . I have received numerous messages from you. Don't be astonished if my mail arouses general admiration, even a slight envy among the others! Once more I am a privileged one. I hope that you receive news from me with the same regularity; then nothing will be missing in our happiness.

The New Testament which Mamma gave me and which I carry constantly, has come uninjured through the fray. I keep this souvenir carefully, as it seems to bring me nearer to you. Lately I have re-read the whole of the New Testament, making written notes.

. . . It is indeed comforting to think that when we lift our eyes towards the sky we see at the same time, you and I, the same spectacle: the sun, the stars, the moon—what a beautiful rendezvous! Besides, I pray for you daily, which helps powerfully to keep up a close communion of thoughts.

Things go better and better with me from every point of view, and I am now the happiest of mortals.

*October 21st.*

I believe that you are continuing to take yourselves in hand in regard to me, and that I am for you a constant source of comfort, in the moments when my letters fail to reach you as well as in those when you receive them.

<sup>1</sup>Technically he has the right to write two letters and four postcards each month.

November 1st.

I received the *Petite Histoire de la Littérature Française* of Faguet. I am now enjoying this work, which delights me. I look back with emotion on the good old days of my studies. . . . How far away all that is! But the past is eternal and lives always within us.

. . . As for the contents of the parcels, the food is far and away the most important element: the books themselves, though they constitute a very telling part, take a second place, way behind the food.

This morning I admired some splendid trees with thick reddish foliage which stood out against the pale blue sky, and of course these marvels made me think of you. I said to myself: "How my beloved parents would love this landscape!" From which it results that there is only one and the same beauty, Beauty, since the beauty of nature leads to the thought of the incomparable beauty in the soul of those one loves.

Forgive the faults in certain passages and the poorness of the style of this rubbish; but the impossibility of scratching out<sup>1</sup> prevents me from retouching what I should like to correct after re-reading.

November 15th.

Memories, intimate treasure, never leave my mind. I often see again a tortoise-head in blue porcelain found in a great empty basin, near Hyeres,<sup>2</sup> and a flowering artichoke in Auvergne.<sup>3</sup> These are one's personal property, inviolable. And how should one not live in serenity and confidence when one knows that our present separation (moreover, a purely physical one) is only a bridge connecting this happy past to a future full of promise? To know how to wait, simply, without worry, that is everything; I conform without trouble and quite naturally to this programme.

November 19th.

The best way in which you can help me at present is to send me food from time to time.

Serenity, untiring serenity.

<sup>1</sup>Prisoners are forbidden to do this.

<sup>2</sup>He was four years old.

<sup>3</sup>He was two years old.